

REMARKS

Introductory Comments

Claims 1-30 are pending. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the allowance of claims 15-30, and the Examiner's indication that claim 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Amendments to the Drawings

Applicants submit herewith a Letter to the Official Draftsman showing proposed amendments to Figs. 8A and 8B to clarify the flowchart shown therein and to make a correction consistent with the specification.

As stated on page 24 lines 21-22 of Applicants' specification, "The hygiene monitoring system 100 detects the Infraction Event (step 324) and processes the Infraction Event (step 326)." Step 326 in Fig. 8B is incorrectly shown as "Process Handwashing Event" and is corrected in the proposed amendment to read "Process Infraction Event" as stated in the specification. In addition, some revisions were made to clarify the flowchart in Figs. 8A and 8B which are consistent with the specification, including: moving the "NO" label by decision block 306 next to decision block 302 to which it belongs (page 23 lines 4-10); adding "YES" and "NO" labels to the branches from decision block 330 (page 23, lines 22-24); moving the "NO" label by block 326 next to decision block 324 to which it belongs (page 24 lines 19-22); and adding an arrow into the side of block 304 to indicate that flow is into and not out-of the right side of block 304 (page 23 lines 5-10). All of these revisions to Figs. 8A and 8B are consistent with the specification as shown by at least the associated references given above. Applicants respectfully request that Figs. 8A and 8B be amended as shown in the Letter to the Official Draftsman.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,202,666 to Knippscheer (hereinafter “Knippscheer”).

Knippscheer discloses a hygiene enhancing apparatus that includes a sensor for generating a first signal upon automatically sensing that an individual has entered a washroom, and for generating a second signal upon automatically sensing that the individual has exited the washroom. The hygiene enhancing apparatus also includes a monitoring device for automatically monitoring an individual upon his entry into the washroom, to automatically determine whether the individual has cleaned his hands. The monitoring device includes a generator for producing a third signal upon a detection by the monitoring device that the individual has cleaned his hands.

Amended claim 1 of the present application recites a “method of monitoring hygiene compliance, comprising: determining whether a person has encountered a monitored piece of moveable equipment; and updating status information associated with the person to indicate that the person is contaminated in response to the determining step determining that the person has encountered the monitored piece of moveable equipment.” In contrast, in Knippscheer, the only time the status of an individual is updated to be contaminated is when the individual enters the washroom. Obviously, a washroom is not a “piece of moveable equipment” as recited in amended claim 1, but is rather a stationary room in a facility. Knippscheer does not teach, disclose or suggest a method as recited in amended claim 1. Therefore, for at least these reasons Applicants believe that amended claim 1 is patentable over Knippscheer. Claims 2 and 3 depend directly on claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner find claims 1-3 allowable over Knippscheer.

Amended claim 4 recites a “method of monitoring hygiene compliance, comprising the steps of: monitoring a person; monitoring an object; . . . and associating a status with the

object, the status being one of contaminated and non-contaminated; the status of the object being switchable between contaminated and non-contaminated.” Knippscheer does not teach, disclose or suggest a method in which the status of an object is “switchable between contaminated and non-contaminated” as recited in amended claim 4. In Knippscheer, the only thing that has a status that changes is a person. The washroom and hand cleaning monitors do not change status between contaminated and non-contaminated. Therefore, for at least these reasons Applicants believe that amended claim 4 is patentable over Knippscheer. Claims 5-11 depend either directly or indirectly on claim 4. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner find claims 4-11 allowable over Knippscheer.

Claim 6 depends from claim 4 and recites the additional step of “establishing at least one contamination zone, wherein the object is associated with a status of contaminated if the object enters a contamination zone.” In Knippscheer, only the person moves; the washroom and hand cleaning station are stationary. Klippscheer does not disclose teach or suggest monitoring the hygiene of an “object [that] enters a contamination zone.” Therefore, for at least these reasons, and the reasons associated with base claim 4, Applicants submit that claim 6 is patentable over Knippscheer. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner also find claim 6 allowable.

Claim 9, depends from claim 4, and recites the additional limitation that “the object is associated with a status of not contaminated when the object encounters a decontamination device.” Klippscheer does not disclose, teach or suggest an object “associated with a status of not contaminated,” nor does Klippscheer disclose, teach or suggest an object encountering “a decontamination device.” Therefore, for at least these reasons, and the reasons associated with base claim 4, Applicants submit that claim 9 is patentable over Knippscheer.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner also find claim 9 allowable.

Amended claim 12 recites a “method of monitoring hygiene compliance, comprising the steps of: monitoring ~~an~~ a non-person object; establishing at least one contamination zone; and updating status information associated with the non-person object to indicate that the non-person object is contaminated in response to the monitoring step determining that the non-person object is in a contamination zone.” Knippscheer does not teach, disclose or suggest a method of monitoring hygiene compliance of a non-person object. In contrast, Knippscheer only discloses monitoring the hand washing of a person. Knippscheer does not teach, disclose or suggest “updating status information associated with the non-person object to indicate that the non-person object is contaminated in response to the monitoring step” as recited in claim 12. Therefore, for at least these reasons Applicants submit that amended claim 12 is patentable over Knippscheer. Claim 14 depends directly on claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner find claims 12 and 14 allowable over Knippscheer.

Final Remarks

Claims 1-30 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Such allowance is respectfully requested.

In the event that there are any questions related to this amendment or to the application in general, the undersigned would appreciate the opportunity to address those questions directly in a telephone interview to expedite the prosecution of this application.

If necessary, Applicants request that this Amendment be considered a request for an extension of time appropriate for the response to be timely filed. Please charge any fees due, or credit any overpayment, to Bose McKinney & Evans LLP's Deposit Account No. 02-3223.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings

Replacement Sheets with revisions to Figs. 8A and 8B without markings, as well as Annotated Marked-Up Drawings showing proposed amendments, are submitted herewith in the Letter to the Official Draftsman.

ANNOTATED MARKED-UP DRAWING

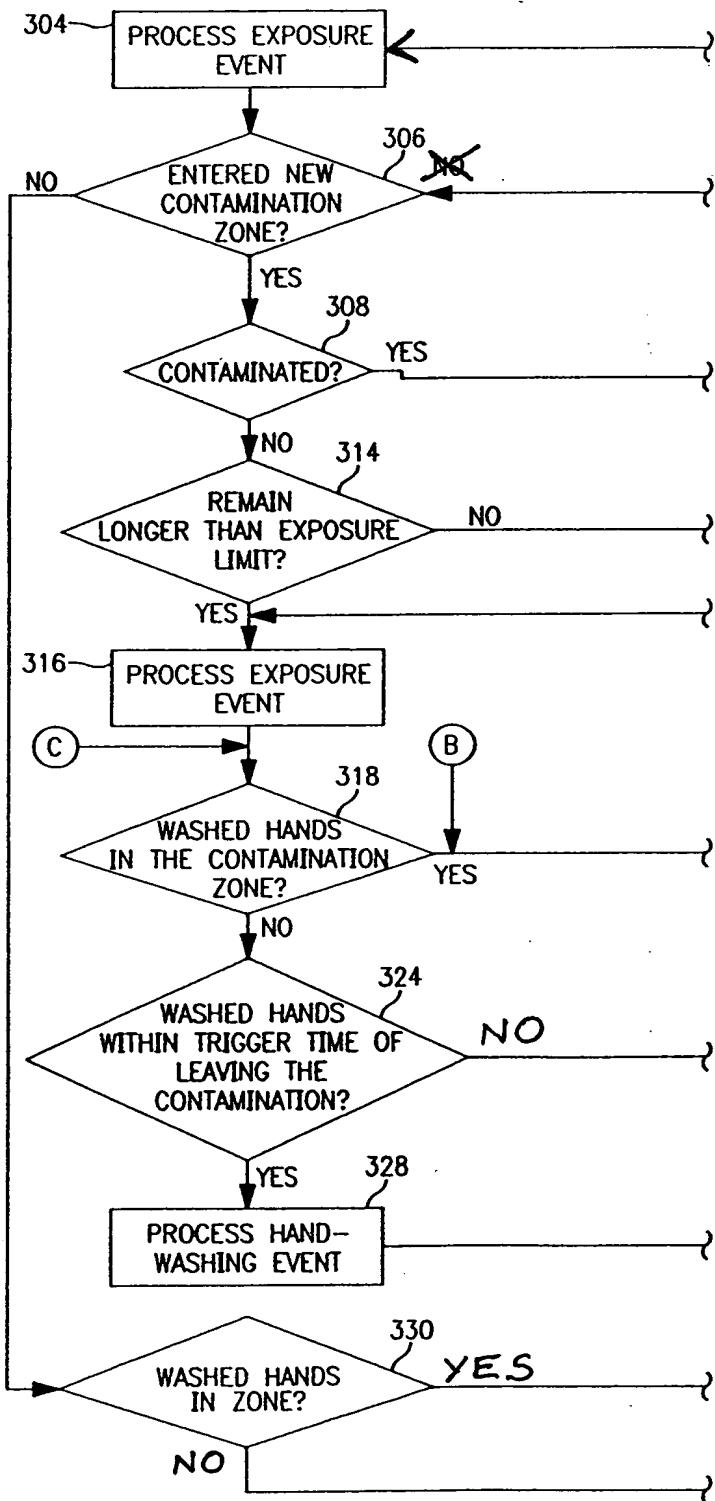


FIG. 8A

ANNOTATED MARKED-UP DRAWING

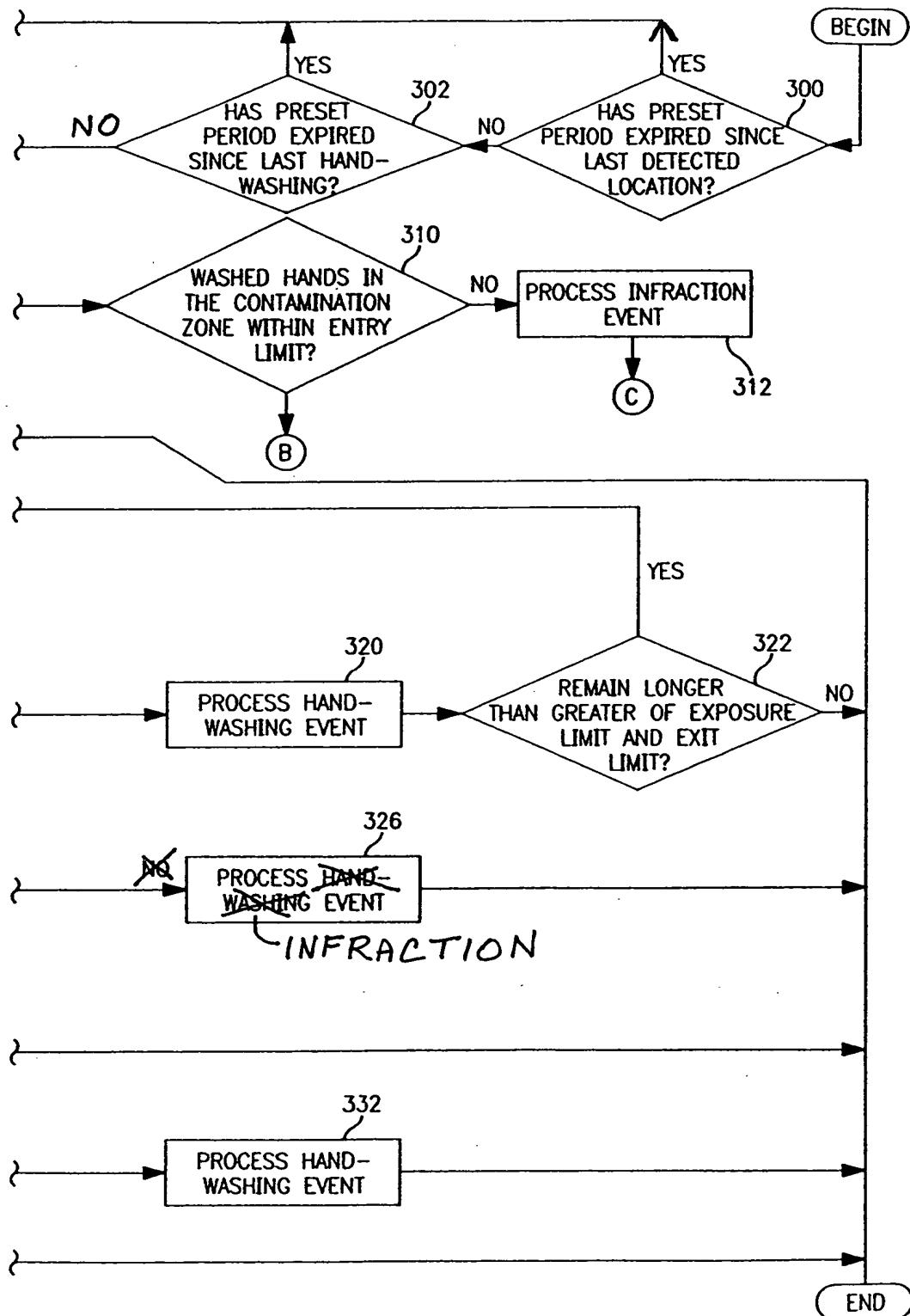


FIG. 8B